Fields of Thought

> A religion which is rich in this sense always has a number of ideas in reserve. Besides the ideas that are being applied to a particular problem or a particular period, there are a number of rich fields of thought which are, in that sense, lying fallow. Where a new theory, invented to meet a new problem, rapidly perishes with that problem, the old things are always waiting for other problems when they shall, in their turn, become new. A new Catholic movement is generally a movement to emphasize some Catholic idea that was only neglected in the sense that it was not till then specially needed; but when it is needed, nothing else can meet the need. In other words, the only way really to meet all the human needs of the future is to pass into the possession of all the Catholic thoughts of the past; and the only way to do that is really to become a Catholic.
>
> **G.K. CHESTERTON, WHERE ALL ROADS LEAD**

In a recent conversation with a friend that is entering the Church this Easter, he mentioned that he could never had imagined the depths to the Catholic faith, and the terrific deposit of thought and knowledge upon which our practices and teachings are based. The above passage from Chesterton beautifully expresses this part of Catholicism that is often completely missed or ignored.

One amazing example of Chesterton's point about some new movement only drawing upon the fallow fields of thought is St. Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body. This was a new work of composition, but the original homilies were themselves meticulously referenced and drawn from very old teachings and ideas of the faith. This Theology of the Body rose in popularity and continues to rise, providing the response and answer to the sexual revolution, collapse of the family, and our culture's rejection of the personhood of the unborn.

I have come across dozens of Catholic books that have fallen by the wayside – books that despite their value have all but disappeared from shelves. In some cases, the only know copies of the texts were in seminary libraries. In their forgotten state, many have passed into the public domain through failure by their publishers to renew the books. They may not be written by canonized saints, or Chruch Doctors or Fathers, but they do represent good works of holy thought. Not having them available in today's print-on-demand and electronic media distribution systems leaves a potential hole in our tapestries of Catholic media, especially the late 19th and early to mid 20th Century.

I have reproduced some books already, with Belloc's Characters of the Reformation and Joan of Arc, Fr. McNabb's Old Principles and the New Order, and The Life and Letters of Father Damien.

I will be continuing to add more books as a project I have come to refer to as "Fields of Thought" after Chesterton's term for the collection of Catholic ideas and expression that grow and multiply, rising when needed to answer the ills of the world.

As new books are added, I will provide links here to the new editions. I already have several works in progress, and should have an announcement or two in the coming months.

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Paul Nowak is a husband and father of 7, who also happens to be a writer and author. He has written *The Way of the Christian Samurai* among other books.

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